

# Development and Environment:

Towards a Sustainable and Equitable World

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Kalpavriksh / Vikalp Sangam /  
Global Tapestry of Alternatives

# India's Impressive Growth

- 5<sup>th</sup> largest economy of world, high growth rates, a billion mobile connections ...



An advertisement for Reliance Digital. The top right corner features the Reliance Digital logo and the tagline "Reliance's online store". The main text reads "Republic of happiness with fabulous offers". A large yellow and red banner in the center says "BUY ANY PRODUCT FOR 26\*". To the right, there is an image of a television with the text "Order 37 or 1 in 1 Android SMART LED TV" and "Early Dealer Price ₹28,990!". At the bottom right, it says "Warranty 36 months (36M) and 1 year (1Y) on parts".

An advertisement for Urban Space. It features a couple in formal attire standing in a modern, dimly lit interior. The text reads "The Epitome of Luxury" in a cursive font, followed by "Signature 3 &amp; 4 BHK Spaces at NIBM Road". The Urban Space logo is prominently displayed in the center, with the tagline "explore. experience. elevate." below it.





# Dominant vision of 'development'



All over the world, nature's mighty barriers separate oil, gas, minerals and water from their destinations. Only a handful of international giants can bridge these gaps. One of them is Indian, Dodsai. Ripping through jungles in Indonesia... Moving the earth in India... Laying pipelines.

#### The Indonesian oil/gas pipeline (X-52 app. Diameter: 1010 to 60 cm.)

A section of this 50-kilometre oil/gas pipeline was laid across 14 kilometres of high swamp terrain. Because of its proximity to the ocean, the swamp water level was governed by the tides. — Laying and taking as much as 3 metres.

Equipment mounted on barges dug the pipe trench below the swamp level.

As the barges rose and fell with the varying tides, continuous changes were made to adjust to the varying levels of swamp water.

Pipe sections were then floated across the swamps, sunk, and buried below the swamp bed.

Dodsai had to bend the pipes to follow the sharp contours of swampland encountered en route.

Hoisting the Indian flag worldwide  
In the last 12 years, Dodsai has emerged as a major

international force in cross-country pipelines.

54 projects in Europe, India, Africa, South East Asia and the Middle East involving turnkey projects.

15,000 kilometres of pipeline — more than halfway round the earth.

Equipment bases in Singapore, Baroda and Muscat.

Training schools in Dortmund (Germany) and Baroda.

A mobile task force of 500 engineers and 3,500 highly-trained technicians.

The track record

— 60 pipelines through the most trying natural obstacles: mountains, desert, fire, jungle and swamp.

Every project completed on or ahead of schedule.

In 1979, Dodsai built India's first over-sea supply pipeline for the Raddermak project in Kalimantan. This pipeline was just the first of its kind in the world.

Dodsai is one of the very few companies with the capabilities for crossing rivers and digging through deep. Dodsai's rock blasting engineers have been trained at Nitro Nobel, Sweden.

Activities in water supply systems.

Dodsai undertakes the water and water treatment packages in a turnkey basis.

The such project has just been completed in Iraq.

This project involved drawing water from the Ghazal in Arab and Oman projects.

Water, including 2,000,000 gallons daily, and building facilities for transportation.

Dodsai's involvement in this area involves from engineering and study to building water stations, purification plants and services.

Other business

— fabrication and maintenance of transmission towers, civil engineering, structural services, plant.

## Dodsai

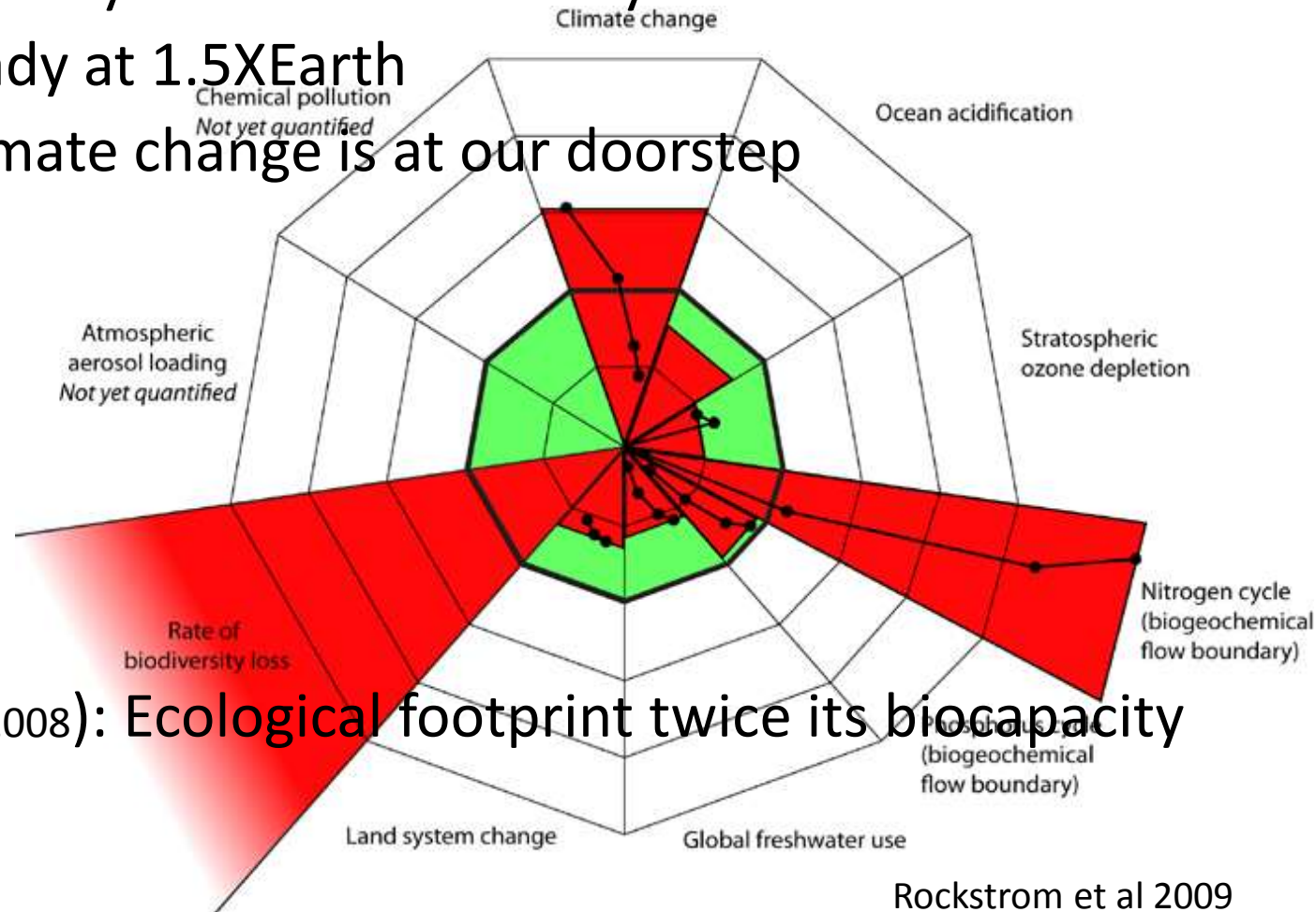
The Indian hand... worldwide.

78-INDIA, 10/80

# Violence against nature, communities, and cultures ... growth as cancer

# Growth-based 'development' is inherently unsustainable

- Several planetary boundaries already crossed
- We are already at 1.5X Earth
- Runaway climate change is at our doorstep



- India (CII/GFN, 2008): Ecological footprint twice its biocapacity
- ....



# Destruction of India's environment and livelihoods

- >5.5 million ha. forest diverted in last 60 years
- >60% land degraded
- 70% waterbodies polluted or drained out
- 40% mangroves destroyed
- 15 of the world's most polluted cities
- Nearly 10% wildlife threatened with extinction
- Extensive chemical poisoning

**Direct impact on livelihoods of 400 million people**



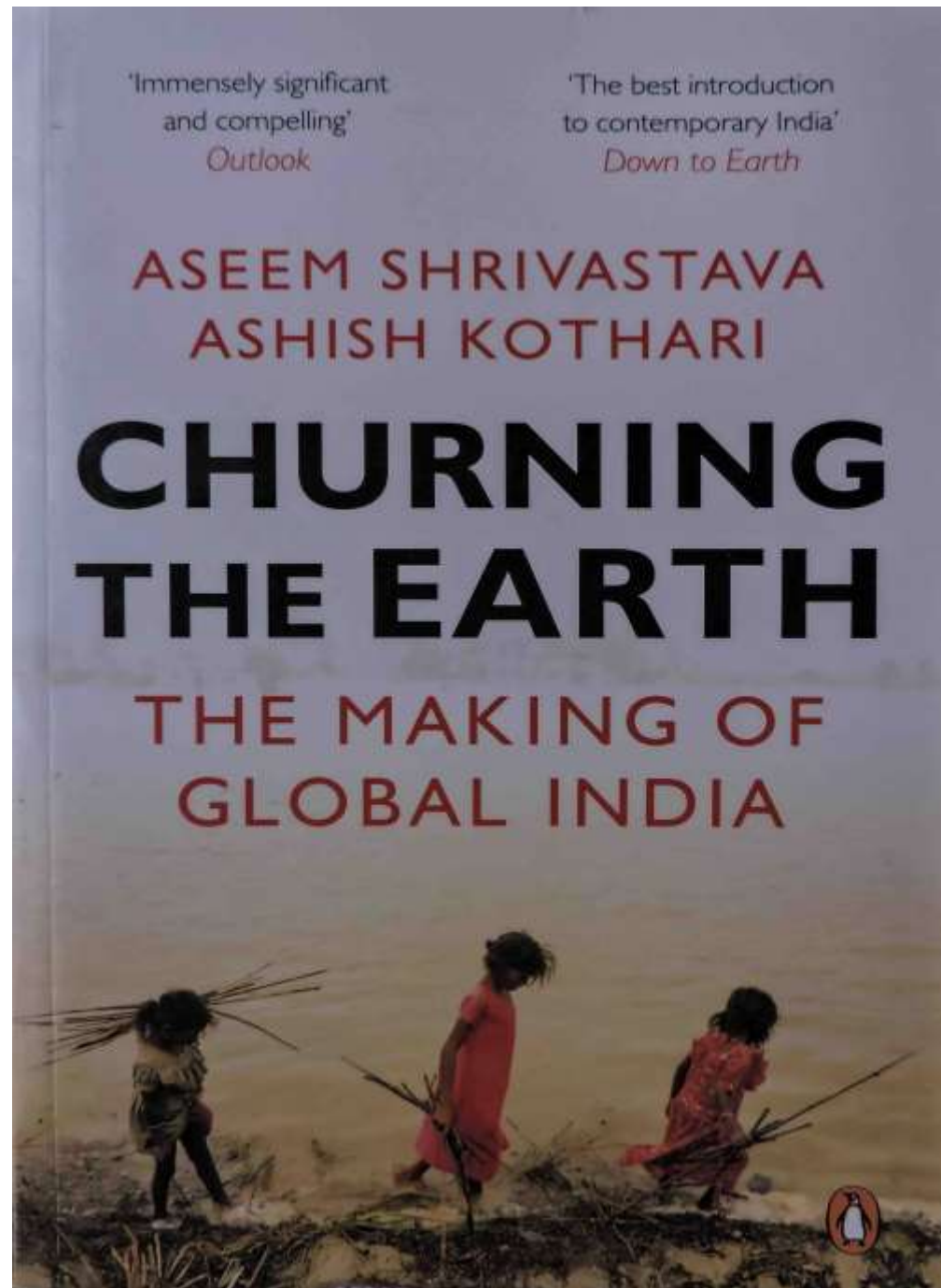
# Displacement & jobless growth; continuing and new poverty

- 1991-onwards, 90% new jobs in informal sector, very vulnerable
- % below **poverty line** (deprived from basic needs): up to 70%
- 60 million people **displaced** by 'development' projects
- **COVID/lockdown: above sections most affected**



# More detail & analysis ...

- Social, ecological, economic impacts of economic globalisation
- People's resistance & alternatives

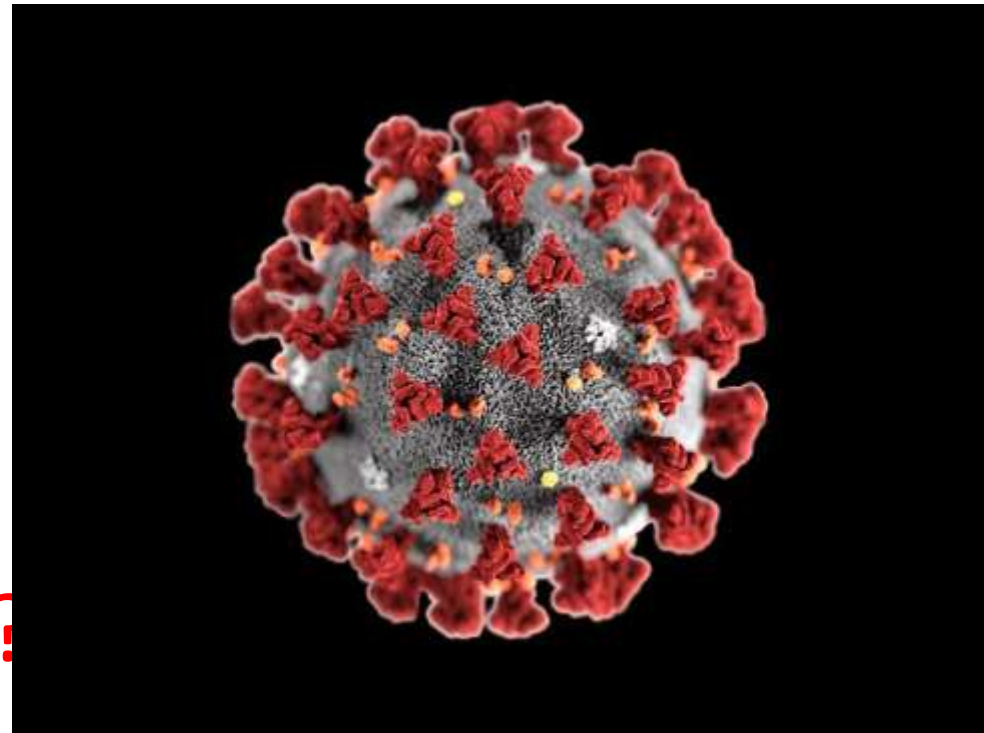


COVID (and related global crises):

an excuse for more authoritarianism and profit-making, or opportunity for systemic transformation towards justice, equity, sustainability?



'ROAD TO NOWHERE'





Are there alternatives?





# Resistance ...

(to capitalism, state authoritarianism, patriarchy,  
communalism, etc)

... is part of the  
alternative





# South Asia: alternative initiatives for well-being





# Deccan Development Society, India: conservation, equity, food sovereignty, livelihood security

- Empowering *dalit* women farmers, through collectives
- Securing women's land rights
- Reviving traditional agricultural diversity / practices (millets)
- Creating community grain banks





# COVID outreach by DDS women

- 20,000 kg foodgrains for relief
- 1000 glasses of millet porridge / daily to municipal/health/police workers





# Maati Sangathan, Uttarakhand (India)

Women's empowerment through nature-based livelihoods

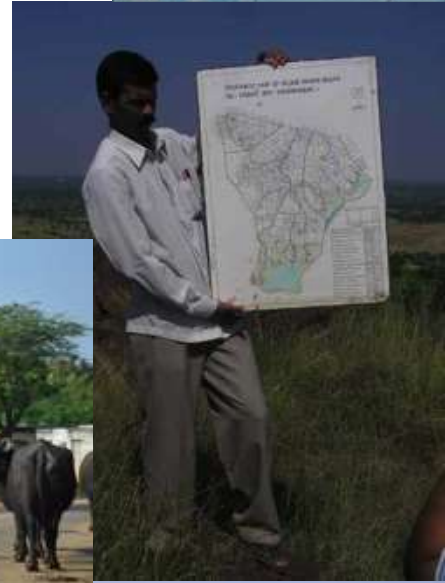




# Gram swaraj (village self-rule) & rural revitalisation: outmigration is *not* inevitable



Ralegan Siddhi & Hivare Bazaar (Maharashtra), Kunariya (Kachchh), Kuthambakkam (TN), Kudumbashree (Kerala)



# Right to a Sustainable City

'Homes in the City', Bhuj (Kachchh, India)

- self-reliance in water, waste management, sanitation
- re-commoning spaces
- livelihoods & dignified housing for the poor
- empowerment of women and girls (*Sakhi Sangini*)



(Hunnarshala, Sahjeevan, Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan, ACT, Setu)



# Urban actions by middle classes ...

Lake revival / conservation,  
water harvesting, garbage  
management (Bengaluru, Salem)



## Participatory budgeting

(Bengaluru/Pune)



## Zero-waste retail (Goa)



# Maha Gram Sabha, Gadchiroli (Maharashtra, India)

- Federation of 90 villages
- *Aims: stopping mining, sustainable livelihoods, forest rights & conservation, local governance, women's empowerment, cultural identity*



Mendha-Lekha: 'we are govt in our village'



# GLIMPSES OF COMMUNITY CONSERVED AREAS IN INDIA

(from: **Directory of CCAs, Kalpavriksh**)





# Alternative Education, Media, Communications, Arts

Many alternative learning spaces:

- Adharshila (MP); Jeevanshala, Narmada; SECMOL, Ladakh; Marudam (TN); Swaraj University (Raj); Beeja Vidyapeeth, Uttarakhand; Bhoomi College, Karnataka

Media free from govt & corporate control:

- Community radio (>150); FM?
- Mobile-based (*CGNetSwara, Chhattisgarh*)
- Movement newsletters, folk theatre
- Film/video (*Video Volunteers*)
- Internet (*Scroll, Wire, Countercurrents ...*)
- 'Social' networks ... virtual communities



Pic: Puroshottam Thakur





# The government responds...

- **Laws/policies:**

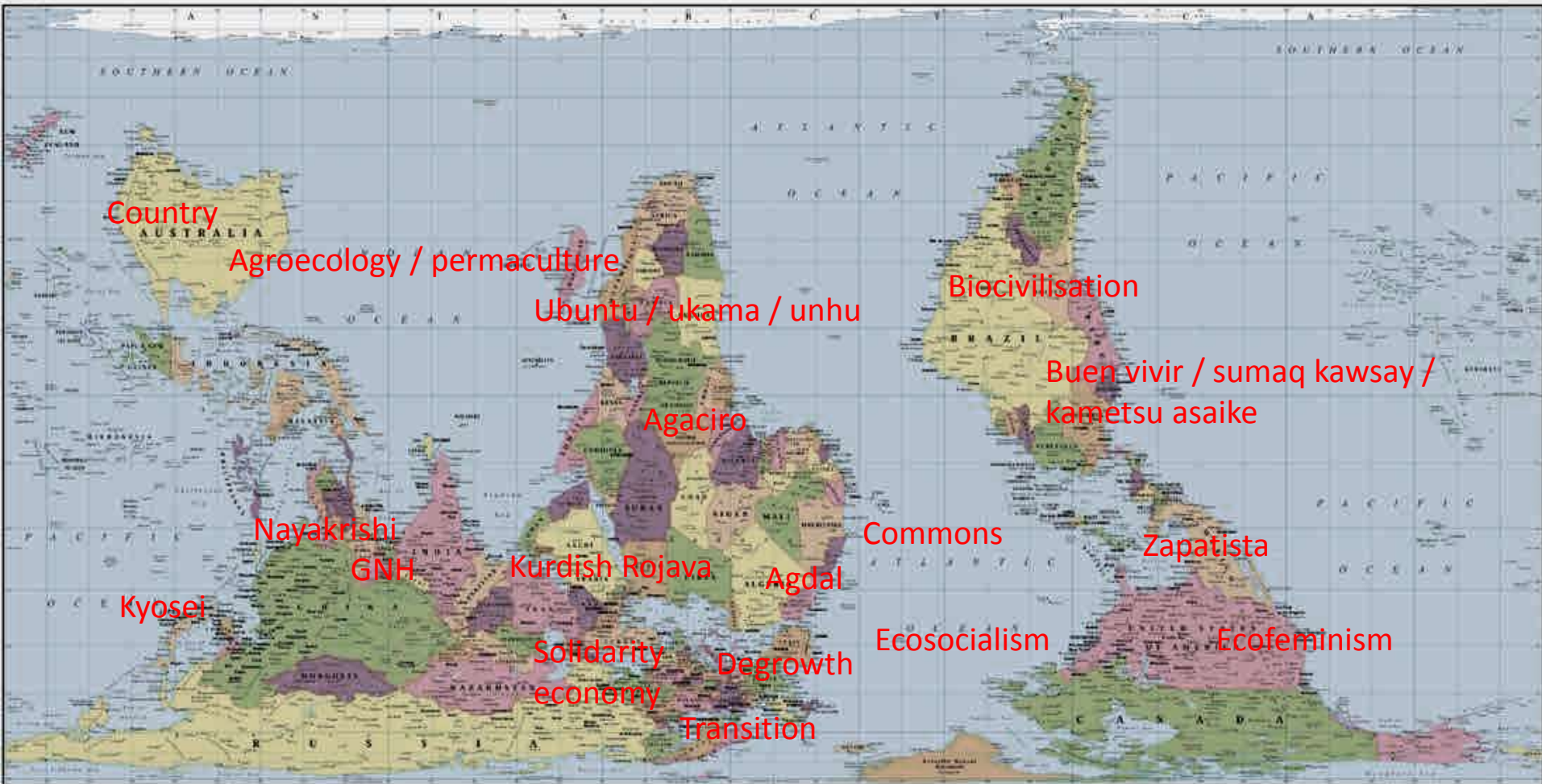
- 73/74 Constitutional amendments for self-governance
- Right to Information Act
- Rural Employment Guarantee Act
- Forest Rights Act

- **Programmes:**

- Organic farming in 16 states: Sikkim 100% by 2015, Andhra 'natural farming', Ladakh by 2025
- Renewable energy
- Kudumbashree women's livelihoods, Kerala)



# Alternatives across the world





# Kurdish Rojava women's movement

- Autonomy, direct democracy, ecofeminist principles in midst of war zone



Images: courtesy Kurdish Women's Movement



# Solidarity economy, alternative currencies, open software: options for urban youth



Pagkaki coop café, Athens



Time-banking at neighbourhood school, Athens, Greece



Beki local currency, Biekerech, Luxembourg

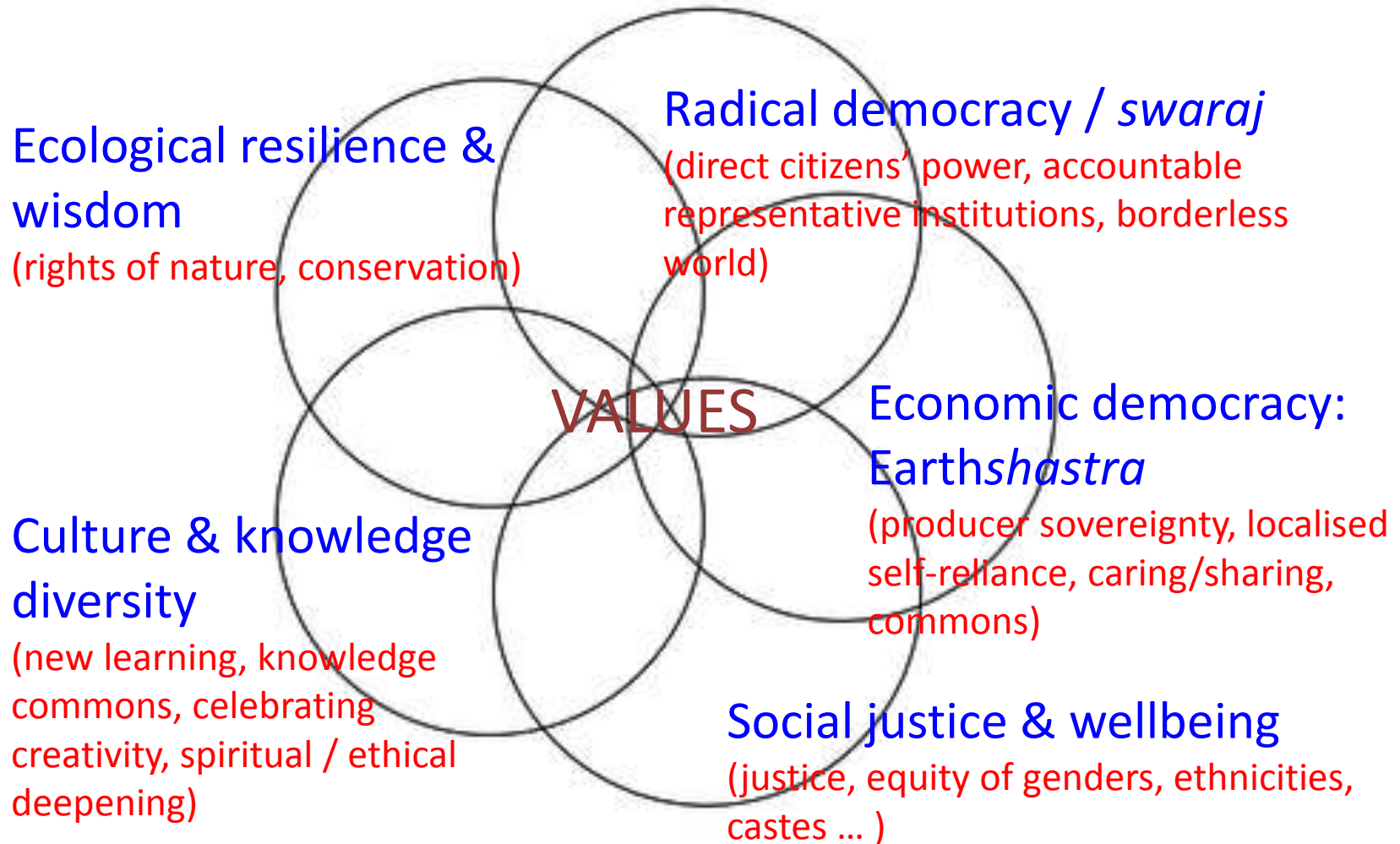
In India:

- Open software / ethical hacking
- Alternative media
- Transformatory arts (e.g. 'Justice Rocks')
- Millet/organic food restaurants
- Non-profit shops



# Prakritik Swaraj

## Radical ecological democracy



# Sphere 1. A NEW POLITICS

Direct democracy (local): decentralised and nested decision-making

Delegated/representative democracy, with mechanisms of accountability (right to recall, public audit, reporting back...)

Ecoregional planning across states and countries ... political units aligned with ecological and cultural ones? Borderless world?

*Conditions: Rights, Capacity, Forums, and Maturity*



## Sphere 2

# A NEW ECONOMICS: *Earthshastra*

Economics as part of ecology

Open localisation: self-sufficiency/sovereignty in basic needs, larger trade built on this

Production, consumption (*prosumption*) locally controlled

Re-integrating work & leisure: *livelihoods*

Re-commoning private & state property

Demonetisation & decentralisation of currencies: Relations of caring/sharing, local exchange systems

# Ingredient 3: A JUST SOCIETY

Towards **equity** amongst  
classes  
castes (*eradication of*)  
genders  
ethnic groups  
species  
'able'ities



Towards universal **rights-based** approaches, infused with  
**responsibilities** ... *sarvodaya*





# Ingredient 4: CULTURE AND KNOWLEDGE

Respecting inclusive diversity of languages, cuisines, knowledges



Decolonising the mind, epistemologies, ontologies

Democratic R&D / S&T / knowledge / innovation: in public domain, participatory, transparent



Media and arts commons

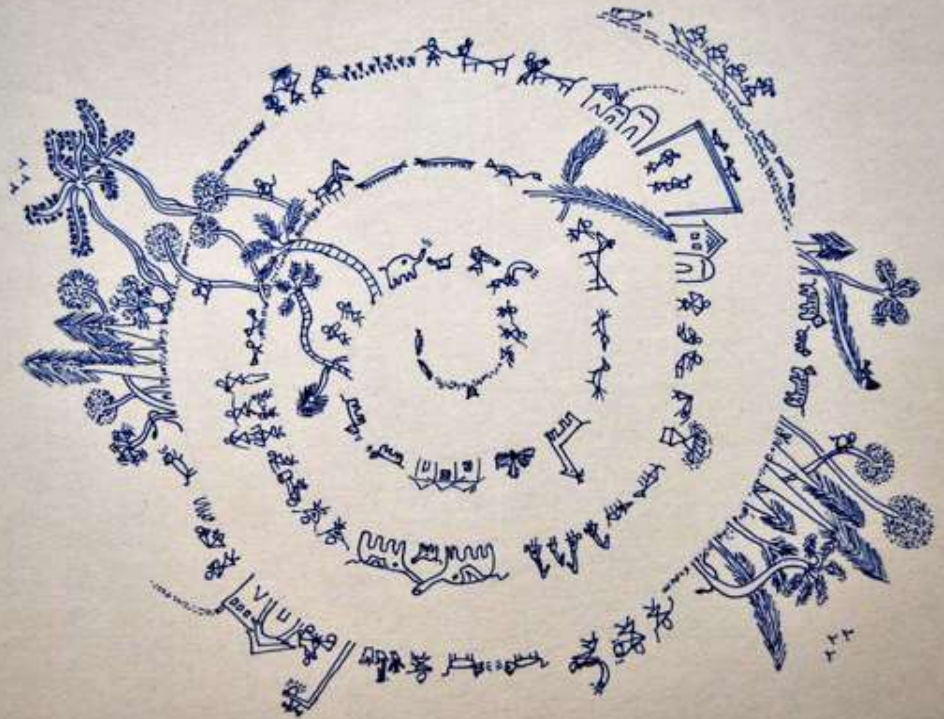
Opportunities for spiritual / ethical growth (without falling into trap of communal religious institutions)



## Ingredient 5.

### RENEWED RELATIONSHIP WITH/IN NATURE

- Recognising humans as part of nature
- Respecting rest of nature (*ethical / spiritual / rights* discourse)
- Conservation, sustainable use





# Values & principles of transformative alternatives ...

- Diversity and pluralism (of ideas, knowledge, ecologies, economies, ideologies, politics, cultures...)
- Self-reliance for basic needs (*swavalamban*)
- Self-governance / autonomy (*swashasan* / *swaraj*)
- Cooperation, collectivity, solidarity, commons
- Rights with responsibilities of meaningful participation
- Dignity & creativity of labour (*shram*)
- Qualitative pursuit of happiness
- Equity / justice / inclusion (*sarvodaya*)
- Simplicity / sufficiency / enoughness (*aparigraha*)
- Rights of nature / respect for all life forms
- Non-violence, peace, harmony (*ahimsa*)
- Subsidiarity & ecoregionalism
- Fun!!!

Worldviews that celebrate life



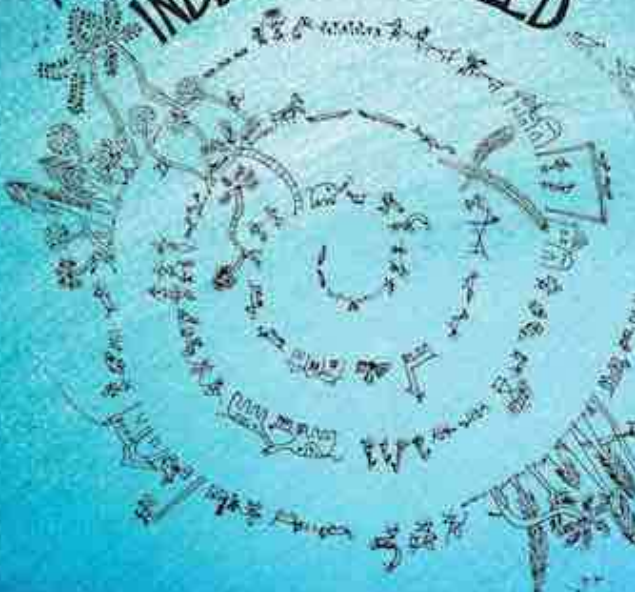
# Vikalp Sangams (Alternatives Confluences): collaborations, cross-learning, collective visioning of future



[www.vikalpsangam.org](http://www.vikalpsangam.org)



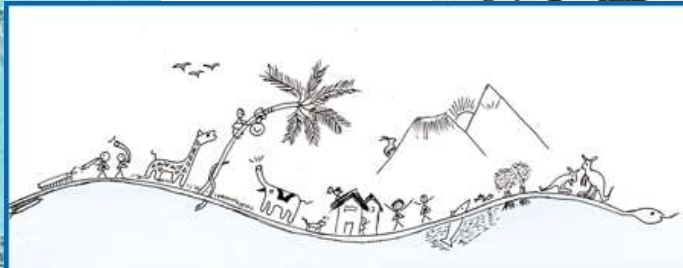
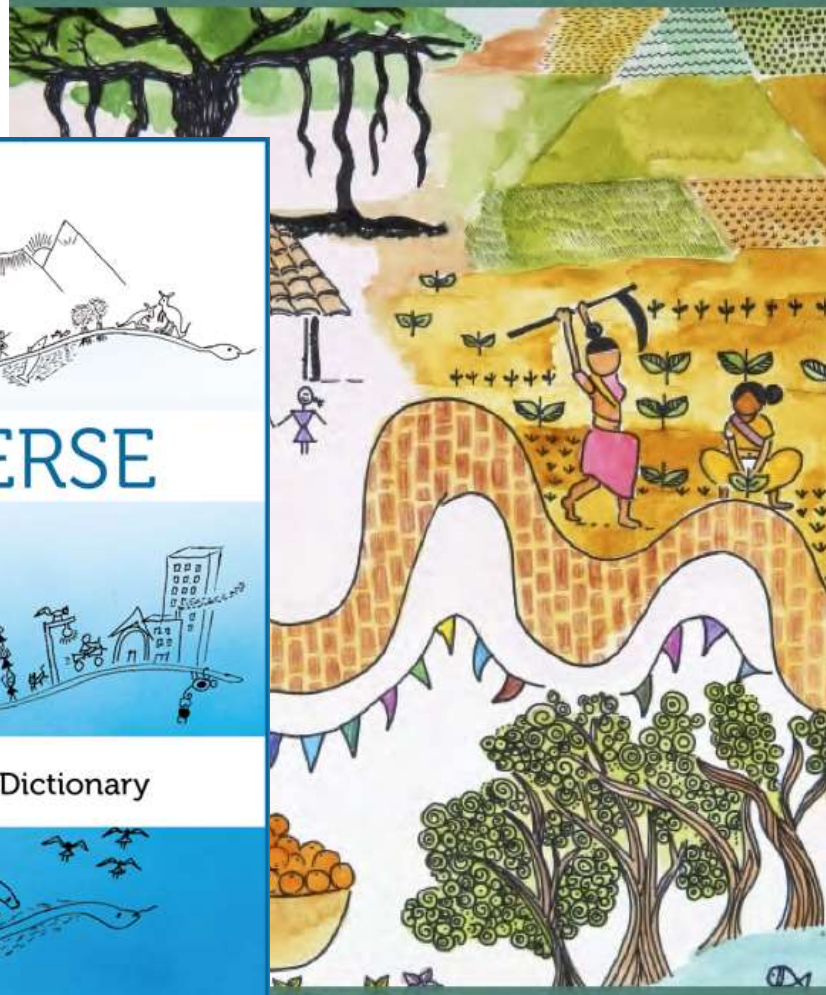
# ALTERNATIVE FUTURES: INDIA UNSHACKLED



EDITED BY  
Ashish Kothari and K. J. Joy

## ECOLOGIES OF HOPE & TRANSFORMATION

POST-DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES FROM INDIA



# PLURIVERSE



A Post-Development Dictionary



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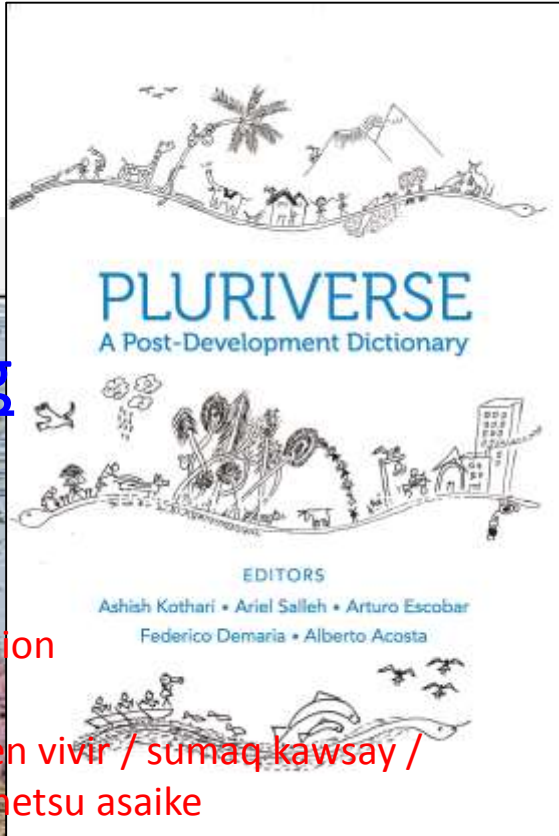
*Seema Kulkarni, Neema Pathak Broome*



# Global Tapestry of Alternatives

weaving radical initiatives across world

[www.globaltapestryofalternatives.org](http://www.globaltapestryofalternatives.org)



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